

Section 4 – The Planning Process

This section of the plan addresses requirements of Interim Final Rule (IFR) Section 201.4 (b) and (c) (1). A copy of the IFR is provided for reference in **Appendix B** of this document.

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Section	What has been updated?
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No change made
4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This section provides a summary of the agency coordination utilized during initial plan development.It also provides a discussion of how other entities participated in the Plan Update process.
4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All mitigation related planning activities throughout the State were reviewed and evaluated.The section was revised to reflect current mitigation planning activities throughout the state.
4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This section was revised to reflect all recent and ongoing FEMA mitigation initiatives and grant programs.The section was then updated to reflect current information and activities.
4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This section was updated to reflect both the initial Plan development process in 2004 and the Plan update process in 2007.This section also includes a summary of how each section of the plan was revised as part of the update process.

4.1 Interim Final Rule Requirements for the Planning Process

The Interim Final Rule (IFR) Subsection 201.4 (b) states the following:

“An effective planning process is essential developing and maintaining a good plan. The mitigation planning process should include coordination with other State agencies, appropriate Federal agencies, interested groups, and be integrated to the extent possible with other ongoing State planning efforts as well as other FEMA mitigation programs and initiatives.”

The IFR Subsection 201.4 (c) (1) requires that the plan include:

“Description of the *planning process* used to develop the plan, including how it as prepared, who was involved in the planning process, and how other agencies participated.”

4.2 Coordination with State and Federal Agencies, and Interested Groups

4.2.1 Agency Coordination During Development of 2004 State Hazard Mitigation Plan

Most agency coordination was achieved by assembling the State Hazard Mitigation Council (also referred to as the State Hazard Mitigation Team, or SHMT, throughout this plan) and establishing the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Activities of these entities are more thoroughly discussed in **Section 4.5**. Beyond the activities of the SHMT and the TAC, the following summarizes efforts to involve other agencies in the planning process.

The IFR requires that state hazard mitigation plans contain a review of FEMA approved local hazard mitigation planning efforts including risk assessments and mitigation goals and actions. At the time that the initial Statewide Hazard Mitigation Plan was being developed, no local hazard mitigation plans had been approved. Therefore, AEMA coordinated with the local Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) and the 12 Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) of the State to gather information that could be incorporated into the State Plan. AEMA provided the local EMAs and the RPCs with a questionnaire to determine local capabilities, hazards, risks, and mitigation goals and actions. All 67 counties were contacted and 37 responded. While the local jurisdictions had just begun the process of developing their hazard mitigation plans, the information obtained proved valuable as a starting point for developing the risk assessment and mitigation strategy of the 2004 Plan.

The IFR states that “State owned critical or operated facilities...shall be addressed.” AEMA identified which State and State-level organizations might own or operate critical facilities, and contacted each directly to request information regarding their assets, operations, and risks. Each was provided with a questionnaire requesting information on agency background, critical facility hazard and risk assessment data, and potential mitigation actions. A total of 42 agencies were contacted and only 25 agencies responded. Most were reluctant to provide information on critical facilities.

FEMA Region IV was closely involved with the development of the initial Plan in 2004. Representatives from the Atlanta office attended several SHMT meetings and provided courtesy reviews of sections of the Plan when requested. FEMA also provided detailed technical assistance by interpreting IFR planning requirements and assisting AEMA in integrating these into the final product.

4.2.2 Agency Coordination for 2007 Plan Update

The initial Plan called for the SHMT to reconvene on an annual basis to review the plan. However, Hurricane Ivan in 2004, Hurricanes Dennis and Katrina in 2005, and the State's responses to these catastrophic events prevented this annual meeting from taking place. The SHMT met once after plan adoption on February 23, 2006 to discuss the plan and the importance of ongoing mitigation activities.

Generally speaking, agency coordination for the plan update was achieved through reassembling the SHMT and then reestablishing the TAC. In fact, one reason the SHMT was created was to ensure coordination among various levels of government and ensure that would be statewide planning effort. Activities and involvement of the SHMT and the TAC are detailed in **Section 4.5**.

When AEMA started the Statewide Hazard Mitigation Plan update process, 64 out of 67 counties in the State had FEMA approved local hazard mitigation plans. Therefore, the local hazard mitigation plans could be reviewed directly, and appropriate information could be extracted and incorporated into the state plan update. Information from the local risk assessment and mitigation strategy sections was extracted and incorporated into this plan. This process helped to ensure that the statewide planning effort was a both a "top-down" and "bottom-up" approach as it pertains to the relationship between the local and state plans. The coordination of local plans is described thoroughly in **Section 7.4** and referenced throughout the plan.

AEMA also consulted with several state and federal agencies represented on the SHMT to obtain information and guidance while updating the hazard profile section. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) was consulted to obtain information on storm surge in coastal areas. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs Office of Water Resources (ADECA-OWR) provided information on drought, dam failure, and the ongoing Flood Insurance Rate Map Modernization Program. ADECA also is the lead agency for many other statewide mitigation planning efforts described in **Section 4.3**. Representatives from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) volunteered to review all of the hazard profiles section to provide feedback and rendered assistance in obtaining information on drought. The Geological Survey of Alabama (GSA) provided substantial information on landslides, earthquakes, subsidence and sinkholes for inclusion in the hazard profiles as well. GSA also leads several statewide mitigation programs which are described in **Section 4.3**.

When reviewing local plans, AEMA found little information regarding local capabilities to carry out mitigation actions, and where information was provided, it tended to be inconsistent. It was very difficult to identify local capabilities throughout the State, even in the most general sense. Therefore, AEMA and the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) conducted a survey of all jurisdictions in the State, including towns, cities, and counties, to determine what

local capabilities exist statewide to carry out mitigation activities. This ongoing process is more thoroughly discussed in **Section 6.7**.

AEMA also sent surveys to local, state, federal, and other agencies that were named as “Responsible Agencies” for mitigation actions in the initial plan. The survey asked the agencies to do the following:

- Provide input on the State’s mitigation goals;
- Review their mitigation actions from the initial plan; and
- Identify mitigation actions that they would be interested in pursuing.

AEMA once again coordinated with State agencies to identify state owned and/or operated critical facility information for incorporation into the plan. This process is ongoing.

FEMA Region IV also participated in the Plan update process by attending conference calls and meetings with AEMA and the planning team. Representatives from the Atlanta office were invited to attend SHMT meetings and provided courtesy reviews of sections of the Plan when requested. FEMA also provided detailed technical assistance by interpreting IFR planning requirements and assisting AEMA in integrating these into the final product. FEMA representatives also assisted by providing general guidance on the plan update process. These activities are described in more detail in **Section 4.5**.

4.3 Integration into Other Ongoing State Planning Efforts

4.3.1 Summary

State-level planning efforts related to hazard mitigation planning are primarily the responsibility of three agencies:

- Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA);
- Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Office of Water Resources (ADECA-OWR), Community and Economic Development Programs (ADECA, CEDP), and Disaster Recovery Program (ADECA, DRP); and
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP).

These three agencies are responsible for the administrative and planning functions for hazard mitigation planning, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), disaster recovery planning, and the CZMP.

Other significant state-level planning efforts related to hazard mitigation are supported by the following State agencies, Federal agencies, and interested groups, all of which are represented on the SHMT:

State agencies:

- Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC);

- Geological Survey of Alabama (GSA);
- Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries;
- Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM); and
- Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT).

Federal agencies:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile and Nashville Districts (USACE);
- U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA);
- U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, National Weather Service, Huntsville, Birmingham, Mobile, and Tallahassee Offices (NWS);
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS);
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS);
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (RD); and
- U.S. Geological Survey, Alabama District (USGS).

Other groups:

- American Planning Association, Alabama Chapter, Alabama Planning Institute (API);
- Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC); and
- Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM).

4.3.2 Ongoing State Planning Efforts and Integration Process

In developing the 2004 Alabama Statewide Hazard Mitigation Plan, AEMA recruited assistance from the twelve Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) within the State of Alabama, represented by the AARC. The RPCs had agreements in place with AEMA to develop local hazard mitigation plans for some counties within their jurisdictions. Since 2004, AEMA has provided considerable technical support and training to RPC planners to gain proficiency in hazard mitigation planning. As of 2006, each of the twelve RPC has at least one hazard mitigation planner on staff to provide ongoing planning services to all jurisdictions within their respective regions.

As a result, the RPCs completed 47 plans from 2004 to 2005. In 2006, AEMA provided additional funding to seven of the twelve RPCs to update 34 plans across the State, while ADECA funded the development of the two county hazard mitigation plans not yet completed. In addition, another 14 counties are updating their own plans utilizing a variety of funding sources provided by AEMA.

Details about the local hazard mitigation plan development and update process are included in **Section 7.2**.

The AARC is a statewide organization comprised of membership from the 12 RPCs. To improve the efficiency and flow of information between the various RPCs regarding development of local hazard mitigation plans, the AARC created the All Hazard Task Force. The task force is comprised of membership from each of the twelve RPCs, along with state and local representatives, and allows each RPC to develop expertise in hazard mitigation planning.

The RPCs are also involved in comprehensive planning activities with local jurisdictions (counties, cities, and towns) and other local or regional interest groups, either by directly developing and updating the plans or assisting in development of the local comprehensive plans. With a thorough knowledge of hazard mitigation planning, the RPCs work with the local agencies to integrate hazard mitigation planning into local and regional comprehensive planning initiatives. AEMA and AARC are continuing to solidify this process.

The RPCs often work in conjunction with the Alabama Planning Institute (API) to provide regular training to local planning officials and planners throughout Alabama. The Alabama Planning Institute, housed within the University of North Alabama Center for Continuing Education, is sponsored by the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association. The Institute has a long-standing and successful record of achievement, and its courses are always in high demand. Topics in hazard mitigation have been recently added to the API courses, and AEMA is working to expand these course offerings to emphasize the integration of hazard mitigation planning into local and regional comprehensive planning processes.

The Association of State Floodplain Managers offers technical support materials for flood hazard mitigation planning and offers a certification program, the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM), for State and local officials involved with floodplain management.

ADECA serves as a lead agency in statewide hazard mitigation planning. ADECA-OWR oversees the Drought Management Program, administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) (see **Section 4.4** for a discussion of NFIP integration), and oversees the State's Dam Safety Program, with legislation pending approval. ADECA's Community and Economic Development Programs Office administers the CDBG, including the Disaster Recovery Initiative (DRI) funded through Congressional response to Hurricane Katrina, coordinates long term disaster recovery planning, and administers grants for local planning activities.

The OWR completed the Alabama Drought Management Plan in 2004 following completion of the 2004 State Hazard Mitigation Plan. The risk assessments and mitigation strategies of the drought plan are integrated into the mitigation strategies of this plan in **Section 6**. According to the plan,

The Alabama Drought Management Plan defines a process to address drought and drought related activities, such as monitoring climatic conditions, vulnerability assessments, impact assessments, response and mitigation. This plan creates a statewide regional structure to identify the different areas impacted by drought conditions, identify risks associated with drought conditions and identify ways to possibly avoid droughts and when drought emergencies cannot be avoided, identify ways to mitigate the impacts of droughts. These objectives are accomplished through the development of drought triggers and indicators and by providing guidance on responses to drought conditions for the various sectors impacted by droughts.

The OWR has also been working to organize an Alabama Dam Security and Safety Program. Legislation to establish this program has been under development for several years and is pending action by the Alabama legislature. The program proposes an up-to-date inventory and survey of dams in Alabama. This inventory should strengthen public safety and emergency response operations in the event of a dam related disaster. In addition to the inventory, the

program proposes regular inspections and permitting (certification) of certain dams for increased protection of life and property in the event of dam failure.

Through its DRI, ADECA administered a special Congressional appropriation through the CDBG program for supplemental funding to aid community recovery and mitigation for communities affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Annual CDBG program funds are used for community development projects at the local level. Funds support a variety of projects including, but not limited to, public infrastructure improvements and economic development initiatives. ADECA reserves a portion of CDBG funds for local planning grants. These grants may be used for developing and updating comprehensive plans. Up to \$50,000 may be awarded to a community. The grant provides a funding mechanism for addressing hazard risks and incorporating hazard mitigation actions into local comprehensive plans.

Following Hurricane Katrina, ADECA established a Long Term Recovery program with a full time State Coordinator. ADECA worked alongside the FEMA Long Term Recovery Team to prepare a Long Term Recovery Plan for the communities of Mobile County. The plan was adopted by all communities and incorporated by amendment into local mitigation plans.

The CZMP is jointly administered through ADCNR and the ADEM. ADCNR is responsible for grant management, planning and policy development, and ADEM is responsible for permitting, monitoring and enforcement.

The ADCNR, State Land Division, Coastal Section administers the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP), a program designed to balance preservation, conservation, enhancement and development of coastal resources, while promoting a sustainable economy in coastal areas. An important component of the program is natural hazards mitigation. In light of this, the Director of ADCNR has been assigned to the SHMT. Planning efforts are coordinated with ADCNR through:

- Discussions of planning activities and mitigation plans with key staff;
- Review of the ACAMP; and
- Review of the Alabama Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP).

The Alabama CIAP was completed in June 2001. Congress authorized the CIAP in October 2000, pursuant to the H.R. 5548-2001 Amendment to the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. The CIAP was passed to assist coastal states with mitigating environmental impacts, related directly or indirectly, to Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas production. The ADCNR, Coastal Section entered into a contract with the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) to assist with the development of the plan and to work with the two county governments in the development of their plans. AEMA is currently working with the ADCNR, Coastal Section and the SARPC to identify mitigation opportunities.

In the past, the ADCNR, Coastal Section has provided grant funds to local communities to fund hazard mitigation plans and plan updates. This has included Baldwin County, Orange Beach and Gulf Shores. At this time, no such grants are in place. However, prior to each fiscal year, the ADCNR, Coastal Section issues a request for proposals under which hazard mitigation projects, plans and plan updates are an eligible category that receive priority ranking.

Projects which have potential impacts on Alabama's coastal resources are regulated through the ADEM permitting and enforcement programs. These regulated projects include the following activities:

- Construction on Gulf-fronting properties;
- Commercial and residential development on properties greater than 5 acres;
- Projects with impacts on wetlands and/or water bottoms;
- Construction of new or expansion of existing marinas;
- Installation of groundwater wells with a capacity greater than 50 GPM;
- Siting, construction and operation of energy facilities;
- Shoreline stabilization projects; and
- Discharges to coastal waters.

The Geological Survey of Alabama (GSA) supports mitigation planning for geological hazards including sinkholes, earthquakes, and landslides. The GSA maintains maps of ecologic formations, with descriptions of characteristic, and prepares reports of findings and recommendations. The information and technical resources of the GSA are critical to the statewide risk assessment of this plan and the development of mitigation strategies that respond to pervasive geological hazards across the State. GSA has developed and maintains maps showing the distribution of known sinkholes, faults, underground mines, and landslides. It maintains records of historical earthquakes and monitors current seismic activity. The GSA also conducts public outreach through the distribution of educational brochures on geological hazards. Currently, AEMA is developing a statewide basement fault map and soil amplification/liquefaction map that will be incorporated into this plan when completed.

Other hazard mitigation initiatives by Federal agencies are described in **Section 6.9**. These are primarily funding mechanisms to augment state and local mitigation activities.

4.3.3 Potential Improvements

The State of Alabama has many opportunities to strengthen or improve the integration of its existing statewide planning initiatives. These opportunities include the following potential improvements:

- Continue the functions of the All Hazard Task Force among the Regional Planning Councils. The All Hazard Task Force meetings are open to any entity involved in the state or local mitigation planning process. This established relationship presents the best opportunity for integration of local, regional and state planning initiatives. The Task Force creates a link between the local and State planning processes. The RPCs are in the process of updating 34 county plans. The completion of these plans will shortly follow the completion of the State plan update. The State can share information gathered in the State plan update with the Task Force for inclusion in the local plans and set higher standards to assure completeness and consistency between State risk assessments, mitigation strategies, and plan maintenance procedures and schedules.
- Continue NFIP training and enlarge the scope of training to address other natural hazards. The lead hazard mitigation planning agencies can improve coordination and delivery of mitigation planning courses to interested individuals throughout the State. The AARC can also become a partner in enlarging training opportunities along with the

Alabama Planning Institute. Expanded and coordinated training presents one of the best opportunities to assure integration of planning initiatives among State, Federal, and other interest groups, and best deliver hazard mitigation planning principles at the local level.

- Maintain a clearinghouse and repository of hazard mitigation plans and technical support publications. AEMA can serve this function and maintain documents and materials in a centralized location for printed distribution and access through the internet.
- Coordinate outreach services among statewide planning agencies. A coordinated public outreach program should more effectively communicate the complete plan and keep the public informed of risks and statewide efforts underway to mitigate those risks.
- Coordinate with ADECA to establish an Alabama Chapter of the Association of State Floodplain Managers in conjunction with the State of Mississippi Floodplain Managers Association. The ASFPM can assist with local training and improve the proficiency of state and local floodplain managers through its Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) program. The chapter can help promote hazard mitigation planning integration among statewide and local agencies and offer a means to improve communications among interested agencies and individuals.
- AEMA should work in conjunction with the ADCNR, Coastal Section to update the ACAMP program document, specifically those parts related to natural hazard mitigation. The resulting information should be incorporated into the State Hazard Mitigation Plan. Updates to the ACAMP program document should be coordinated with the scheduling of updates to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan to assure consistency. The ACAMP should schedule time updates of the ACAMP program document to allow for a direct feed of the latest data from the State Hazard Mitigation Plan into the ACAMP program document.

4.4 Integration into Other FEMA Mitigation Programs and Initiatives

4.4.1 Summary

AEMA administers and oversees Federal mitigation grant programs for the State of Alabama that are related to hazard mitigation, emergency management and disaster relief, as well as serving as the lead agency for the State in disaster mitigation efforts. Due in part to the agency's dual roles, AEMA has the opportunity to integrate the dissemination of mitigation information with the FEMA grant application process for the programs listed in **Section 4.4.2**.

The Alabama Office of Water Resources (OWR) administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) within the State of Alabama, with responsibilities assigned to the State NFIP Coordinator and support staff. The primary responsibilities of the office of the State NFIP Coordinator include facilitating participation in the NFIP among Alabama communities, providing technical support and training to local administrators, and encouraging participation in the Community Rating System (CRS) Program.

4.4.2 List of Ongoing FEMA Mitigation Programs and Initiatives

FEMA Grant Programs (see table in **Appendix I** for an overview of all FEMA grant programs and initiatives):

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP);
- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM);
- Public Assistance Grant Program (PA);
- Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA);
- Repetitive Flood Claims (RFC) Grant Program; and
- Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) Grant Program.

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP):

- State NFIP Coordination;
- Community Rating System (CRS); and
- Map Modernization Program (MMP).

4.4.3 Integration Process and Potential Improvements

The SHMT identified and reviewed State of Alabama laws, regulations, policies and programs pertaining to mitigation and FEMA sponsored programs and supporting regulations.

- FEMA Grant Programs:
 - The Alabama EMA administers all FEMA grant programs. It notifies communities and eligible applicants of the availability of program funds, provides applicant briefings and technical assistance, reviews applications for eligibility and compliance, and recommends funding to FEMA. AEMA serves as the grantee of FEMA grant awards and oversees the implementation of funded projects by subgrantees (communities and other eligible applicants). AEMA should continue to facilitate and monitor grant awards to eligible applicants.
 - Consistency of project applications with local mitigation plans is required by AEMA to assure integration of local mitigation activities with the hazard mitigation planning process.
 - The grant award process can be improved by adhering to an established prioritization criteria presented in the State plan.
- National Flood Insurance Program.
 - The NFIP Coordinator should continue to maintain a five-year plan for its community assistance programs.
 - The State NFIP Coordinator and staff should continue to provide statewide support for local participation in the NFIP, facilitating NFIP membership, assisting with flood hazard prevention ordinance development and Federal compliance, providing training and technical support to local floodplain ordinance administrators,

encouraging the floodplain management practices of the NFIP, and promoting flood insurance.

- The NFIP staff should continue to regularly conduct Community Assistance Visits (CAVs) among NFIP participating communities throughout the State. During these visits the staff should not only check for program compliance but offer guidance and support for improved flood hazard mitigation practices.
- In addition to regular NFIP participation, the State office should encourage Community Rating System (CRS) program participation by NFIP communities and assist current CRS communities to continually seek higher CRS classifications.
- The NFIP Coordinator should continue working closely with the Alabama EMA to assure strong integration of local flood hazard mitigation practices into local and state hazard mitigation planning policies.
- The OWR should complete its statewide flood map modernization program for the State, including the development of Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs) that will readily provide flood GIS data for local and statewide risk assessments for hazard mitigation planning.
- The State NFIP Coordinator should continue to conduct formalized training and distribute technical publications to local floodplain administrators, building officials, public works engineers, planners, and state and local officials involved in hazard mitigation. The popular and regular course offering, *Managing Floodplain Development through the NFIP*, should be conducted annually or as needed.
- Coordinate with ADECA to establish an Alabama Chapter of the Association of State Floodplain Managers in conjunction with the State of Mississippi Floodplain Managers Association to further improve participation in the NFIP.

4.5 Description of the Planning Process

4.5.1 How the Plan was Prepared and Updated

The 2004 Alabama State Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared in general accordance with the processes established in the How-To Guides produced by the FEMA, and the requirements of the February 26, 2002 IFR. As discussed below, early in the development of the initial plan, Governor Riley signed Executive Order 19 (**Appendix C**) on February 24, 2004, which accomplished the following:

- Established the SHMT (see **Appendix D** for full membership).
- Encouraged representatives from all State agencies to attend SHMT meetings.
- Directed all State agencies to participate in the development of the plan by providing services as directed by the SHMT.

- Encouraged agencies and other interested parties to participate in the planning process by providing comments and information via meetings, surveys, questionnaires and other means.
- Directed the SHMT to assist in prioritizing and selecting of hazard and pre-disaster mitigation grant program project applications.
- Directed the SHMT to meet when called by the Chair and remain in place until the three-year update to the plan has been approved by FEMA.
- Directed the SHMT to prepare the State Hazard Mitigation plan.

In developing the initial risk assessment, the SHMT initially considered 15 hazards Statewide based on primary research. Through a rating system (explained in detail in **Section 5**), the SHMT reduced the list to the three most significant hazards that create risks for the State: floods, hurricanes and tornadoes. For each of these hazards the detailed risk assessments were performed that included calculations of future expected damages expressed in dollars. From the results of the risk assessment, the SHMT developed a mitigation strategy composed of actions identified by AEMA, other SHMT agencies, and other existing State and local plans. The plan was approved by the SHMT, adopted by the AEMA Director on behalf of the Governor, and approved by FEMA on October 17, 2004.

As mentioned in **Section 4.2**, the initial plan called for the SHMT to reassemble on an annual basis to review and evaluate the plan in the following areas:

1. Changes in risk;
2. Changes in laws, policies, or regulations at the state or local level;
3. Changes in State agencies or their procedures that may affect mitigation programs or administration of funds;
4. Changes in funding sources or capabilities;
5. Changes in composition of the SHMT;
6. Progress on mitigation actions and new mitigation actions being considered; and
7. Major changes to local hazard mitigation plans.

Unfortunately, the annual SHMT meetings did not take place. Approximately two weeks after the final SHMT meeting held during the initial plan development, Hurricane Ivan struck the Alabama Gulf Coast causing catastrophic damage throughout the State. The following year, Hurricanes Dennis and Katrina caused substantial damage as well. These events forced AEMA and other State agencies to adjust their priorities to focus on the response and recovery efforts.

Since adoption of the initial, one SHMT meeting was held on February 23, 2006. At this meeting, Mr. Charles Williams, AEMA Preparedness Division Chief, made a brief presentation of mitigation programs and emphasize the importance of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan. The majority of those in attendance asked specific questions about the NFIP and its requirements. Mr. Ken Meredith, with the NFIP, was in attendance and answered those questions.

AEMA began working on the plan update in November 2006 and hired a consultant team to facilitate the plan update process in March 2007. A kickoff meeting was held on March 19, 2007 between AEMA and the consultant team to determine an initial strategy for updating the plan. This strategy was outlined in meetings with representatives from FEMA Region IV. Minutes

from these meetings are included in **Appendix L**. The first step of the process was to perform a gap analysis of the 2004 Plan. The team reviewed each section comparing it to FEMA's revised *Standard State Hazard Mitigation Plan Review Crosswalk* dated November 2006 and FEMA's *Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance* (also known as *The Bluebook*) dated March 2004 and revised November 2006.

The SHMT was reassembled on April 25, 2007. Results of the gap analysis were presented to the SHMT as well as the strategy for completing the State Plan update. The SHMT concurred with the strategy. Each section of the plan was then updated to meet the needs of the gap analysis. The review and update process for each section is detailed in **Section 4.5.4**. Each section was submitted to AEMA for interim reviews. An initial draft of the plan was submitted to the SHMT and FEMA for review on June 30, 2007.

Both FEMA and the SHMT had 45 days to review the draft plan. AEMA received all comments and then incorporated them into the plan, where appropriate. A summary of comments is available in **Appendix K**. The plan was resubmitted on September 12, 2007 for final review and approval.

4.5.2 Who was Involved in the Planning Process

The Alabama State Hazard Mitigation Team was the primary mechanism for developing and updating the mitigation plan. The SHMT is, however, part of a larger organization and process. The groups are listed in the bullets below, along with a general description of their respective roles in the process in the following sections.

- The Governor of Alabama;
- Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA);
- State Hazard Mitigation Council (also known as the Team, or SHMT);
- SHMT Technical Advisory Committee;
- Other Federal and State agencies;
- Interested groups including private non-profits and non-governmental organizations;
- Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs); and
- Citizens.

The Governor of Alabama

By issuing Executive Order No. 19, the Governor initiated development of the State Hazard Mitigation, designated members of the SHMT, outlined their tasks, and directed the Director of AEMA to lead the planning effort. EO 19 is valid until the updated plan has been approved and adopted, so there was no need for a new Executive Order. The 2004 Plan was adopted by the Governor through the AEMA Director. The Plan Update will be approved and adopted by the Governor through the AEMA Director.

The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA)

AEMA is the lead agency for development of the plan. Although the SHMT is the group responsible for the actual development and production of the plan, AEMA served as a coordinating entity throughout its development. The Agency facilitated most interactions among various Federal, State and local governments, and provided important oversight and quality

control to ensure that the plan and associated process met Federal requirements. AEMA served as the lead agency for the plan update process as well. AEMA coordinated the updating of all aspects of the plan and facilitated coordination among agencies at all levels of government. The AEMA Director is also responsible for final approval and adoption of the Plan on behalf of the Governor.

The State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT)

The State Hazard Mitigation Team is the key organization in the development of the plan. The group was designated by the Governor via Executive Order 19, and is comprised of a variety of organizations that were originally identified to be on a similar team in a previous administration. During the initial stages of the planning process, the Governor's office and AEMA reviewed the proposed composition of the SHMT and made several changes to update it. The SHMT (coordinating with AEMA) was responsible for developing all substantial plan process and content. The SHMT formally met four times during development of this plan. These meetings were facilitated by AEMA and its consultant.

Prior to its regular meetings the SHMT received packets of detailed information that would be presented and considered. In some cases the SHMT merely reviewed and approved, rejected or modified proposed elements of the plan, typically via a voice vote. For more complex matters that required discussion or debate, the SHMT was typically presented with specific plan elements, followed by facilitated discussions, and in most cases specific consensus resolutions. For example, during its second general meeting the SHMT developed a draft set of statewide mitigation goals that was subsequently re-drafted and presented to the group for approval. All matters of substance were handled this way.

The SHMT was reconvened on April 25, 2007 as part of the plan update process. During the update, the SHMT made all final decisions regarding the plan, reviewed drafts, provided comments, and made recommendations to the AEMA Director. Individual representatives of agencies on the SHMT were also asked to provide feedback for their respective agencies and coordinate the development of the risk assessment and mitigation strategy.

The SHMT met again on August 23, 2007 when it reviewed the draft plan. There was one comment received as a result of the last SHMT meeting and there were comments received prior to the meeting. The Alabama Cooperative Extension Program expressed their desire to assist in developing a mitigation program to protect the impact of storm damaged urban trees. This program will further explained in the Enhanced Plan elements pending the adoption of the basic plan. The first comment was about including a description local communities' participation in the National Weather Service's StormReady program. The details on Alabama's participation will be included in **Section 6**, as part of the mitigation strategy. Another comment received was to create a mitigation measure that directly addresses the provision of back-up power (generators) to the two year colleges; again this was addressed in **Section 6**. After comments were incorporated, the SHMT recommended it for approval and adoption by the AEMA Director on behalf of the Governor.

EO 19 directed the following individuals and agencies to serve as members of the SHMT:

- The Governor or his designee who shall serve as chair;
- The Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Industries;
- The Attorney General;

- The Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources;
- The Director of the Department of Economic and Community Affairs;
- The Director of the Emergency Management Agency;
- The Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management;
- The State Forester of the Alabama Forestry Commission;
- The Office of the State Geologist;
- The State Historic Preservation Officer;
- The Commissioner of the Insurance Department;
- The Director of the Governor's Legal Council Office;
- The Director of the Alabama Department of Public Health;
- The Director of the Governor's Public Information Office;
- The Director of the Alabama Department of Public Safety;
- The Commissioner of the Alabama Public Service Commission;
- The Secretary of State;
- The Director of the Department of Transportation;
- The Director of the Alabama Association of Regional Councils;
- The Director of the Alabama League of Municipalities;
- The Director of the Association of County Commissioners;
- The Director of Indian Affairs;
- The Chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and
- The Director of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority.

In addition to those individuals and agencies directly assigned to the SHMT, the EO requested that the following agencies establish points of contact for the Hazard Mitigation Team:

- The American Red Cross;
- The Military Department;
- The National Weather Service, Birmingham;
- The National Weather Service, Huntsville;
- The National Weather Service, Mobile;
- The National Weather Service, Tallahassee;
- U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB;
- U.S. Army, Fort Rucker Army Post; and
- USDA Forest Service.

The table below offers a brief summary of meetings held. Complete minutes of these meetings are provided in **Appendix L**. Meetings 8, 9, 10, and 11 were held as part of the plan update process.

Table 4.5-1
Summary of State Hazard Mitigation Team
Meetings, Including Count of Federal and Non-Federal Attendance

	Place/Date	Subject(s)	Federal	Non-Federal
1	B/12-10-03	Initial meeting of consultants and AEMA team	0	8
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce participants 		

Table 4.5-1
Summary of State Hazard Mitigation Team
Meetings, Including Count of Federal and Non-Federal Attendance

	Place/Date	Subject(s)	Federal	Non-Federal
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for SHMT 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work plan 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial information needs 		
2	C/01-19-04	First project progress meeting	0	7
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress update 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of planning process 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMA2K planning requirements 		
3	B/02-26-04	First general meeting of SHMT	8	22
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions and talk by Todd Davison, FEMA R4 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning process 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State mitigation planning process 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Order No. 19 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Composition of SHMT 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Technical Advisory Committee 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on natural hazards 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk assessment procedures 		
4	M/04-08-04	Second general meeting of SHMT	7	24
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review materials for posting on AEMA website 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of plan outline 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of draft planning process section 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of plan adoption process section 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of risk assessment section 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of materials/plans for public workshops 		
5	M/05-26-04	Third general meeting of the SHMT	4	20
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capability and program assessment update 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk assessment/state-owned facilities 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local mitigation plan reviews 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goals, objectives, strategies 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan implementation and monitoring 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced plan elements 		
6	M/09-01-04	Final general meeting of the SHMT	2	20
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review final draft plan materials 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of procedures to finalize/adopt plan 		
7	M/02-23-06	SHMT Meeting to discuss Mitigation Activities	n/a	n/a
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not part of plan update process 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intended to discuss importance of the plan and ongoing mitigation activities 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants focused primarily on the NFIP 		
8	B/03-19-07	Initial meeting of consultants and AEMA team for update	0	7
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce participants 		

**Table 4.5-1
Summary of State Hazard Mitigation Team
Meetings, Including Count of Federal and Non-Federal Attendance**

	Place/Date	Subject(s)	Federal	Non-Federal
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish schedule and process 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Initial information needs 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss reassembling the SHMT 		
9	M/04-23-07	Meeting b/w consultants, AEMA, and FEMA Region IV	1	4
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review update strategy w/ FEMA 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review results of gap analysis 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress made with FEMA 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request concurrence / clarification / guidance on plan update requirements 		
10	M/04-25-07	Initial SHMT meeting for plan Update	5	29
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Results of gap analysis 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress to date 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review strategy for updating plan 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek concurrence on mitigation goals 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek concurrence on significant changes to Hazard Profiles and Risk Assessment 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek concurrence on strategy to review and incorporate local plans 		
11	M/08-24-07	Final SHMT Meeting to review Plan Update	4	14
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the required revisions from the July 2007 FEMA review 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss any additional comments, mitigation actions and/or strategies 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the need to complete the Enhanced Plan Update as well as identifying the States' critical facilities 		

Note:

1. In the place/date column, the abbreviation "B" is Birmingham, "C" is Clanton, and "M" is Montgomery.
2. The Federal and non-Federal agencies attending the meetings can be found in the minutes, **Appendix L**.
3. A sign-in sheet for the 2/23/06 Meeting was not available; however the meeting invitation and minutes are attached.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

During its first general meeting in 2004, the SHMT designated a sub-group called the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to perform the most simple administrative functions that were required to develop the plan. For example, the group approved of meeting agendas and meeting places, determined the amount of written materials required for meetings, etc. This group also acted as a recommending body to the greater SHMT in some cases, although in no case was the TAC permitted to independently make substantial decisions about plan content. In all such cases, the information was presented to the SHMT for review and disposition. The TAC was re-established at the April 25, 2007 meeting as a day-to-day decision-making body to provide guidance and oversight to the plan update process. The TAC was not given the authority to make decisions in lieu of the SHMT but to serve in an administrative role.

The Regional Planning Councils (RPCs)

The RPCs are a group of 12 organizations that provide a variety of services to the counties in their respective districts. All of the counties in Alabama are part of an RPC. Among the many other services that these organizations provide is oversight and coordination of the development of most of the county-level hazard mitigation plans. The RPCs are also part of an umbrella organization called the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) the Director of which is a member of the SHMT. During the development of the plan, the AARC Director was responsible for disseminating information about the process and its products to the various RPCs and to generally represent their interests. In addition to these activities, various members of the SHMT and AEMA interacted with the 12 RPCs during development of the county plans to promulgate information about the State Plan and to gather input about the local and county plans to inform the state-level process. The RPCs were enlisted to coordinate with local governments during the plan update process as well. The RPCs coordinated with AEMA to conduct a survey of local governments to determine their capabilities to carry out mitigation actions. In addition, the RPCs are currently assisting 34 counties update their plans. Results of the local plan review process and recommendations for improvement will be dispersed back to the local communities through the RPCs.

Other Federal and State Agencies, Interested Groups, Including Private Non-Profits and Non-Governmental Organizations

Early in the planning process the SHMT and AEMA identified a list of entities that should be involved in the plan development process including federal and state agencies, interested groups, private non-profits and non-governmental organizations. In the first stages of the process these groups were contacted and points of contact identified. Throughout development of the plan, these groups and the points of contact were informed of the planning process and its outcomes. Because EO 19 formally established the SHMT, the Team itself was the only body directly authorized to make decisions about what was included in the plan. However, at many points in the process, these other organizations were invited to review materials related to the plan and comment on them. Representatives from these agencies, groups, and organizations were invited to attend the SHMT meetings and participate in the plan update process.

As noted in above, the RPCs provided a conduit for information to flow both from the local communities to AEMA, and vice versa. These agencies and the AARC participated throughout development of the plan by providing representatives at the SHMT meetings, maintaining contact with AEMA and its consultant as the local mitigation plans were being developed, facilitating AEMA participation in the local planning workgroups, and interacting with AEMA and its consultant to provide information about the contents of the local plans. The RPCs had a primary coordination function in the development of local plans throughout the State, guiding development and reviewing local plans, and ensuring that appropriate procedures were observed throughout. The AARC established an All-Hazards Task Force that facilitated development of local plans. All 12 of the individual RPCs provided representatives for the Task Force which met at least once a month during the period in which the local plans were being developed. The AARC also served as subgrantee for FEMA hazard mitigation grants via Hazard Mitigation Grant Program "7%" planning funds made available via Disaster Numbers 1438, 1442 and 1466. The RPCs assisted in the plan update process by facilitating coordination with local governments to obtain information regarding their local capabilities. Representatives from the AARC also attended SHMT meetings and coordinated with AEMA in developing the discussion of local plan development and updates contained in **Section 7**.

FEMA provided assistance and support throughout development of this plan. Representatives from FEMA Region IV (Atlanta) attended most of the SHMT meetings and provided input on numerous occasions. FEMA Region IV also provided a preliminary review of the draft plan, beginning in June 2004, offering detailed comments on sections of the plan that were available. This review was especially important because it enabled AEMA to address areas of particular concern to plan reviewers prior to submitting the final product. FEMA Region IV provided technical guidance and support throughout the plan update process by attending meetings with the Team and performing interim draft and formal reviews of the updated plan.

Public Involvement

AEMA sought to involve citizens in the process throughout development of the plan. This was done in several ways. AEMA developed a detailed posting on its web site that described the purpose of the plan and progress on its development. The web site and posting were linked to various state agency web sites. The posting was updated twice during development of the plan. The postings each provided methods of contacting AEMA to ask questions about the plan and to provide input. In addition to the web postings, AEMA held a series of regional workshops to explain the plan to citizens and to solicit comments. Four meetings were held.

- June 22, 2004; Armory Learning Arts Center, Montgomery, AL; 7 – 8 p.m.
- June 23, 2004; Huntsville City Hall, Huntsville, AL; 7 – 8 p.m.
- June 24, 2004; Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency, Birmingham, AL; 7 -8 p.m.
- June 28, 2004; Weeks Bay Reserve Interpretive Center, Fairhope, AL; 7 – 8 p.m.

These meetings were publicized via a Media Advisory that was promulgated by the AEMA Public Information Officer on June 15, 2004. The Media Advisory read as follows:

“The Alabama State Hazard Mitigation Council will hold a series of public meetings to outline goals and objectives for a statewide hazard mitigation plan. The purpose of the statewide hazard mitigation plan is to identify risks from future natural disasters and to identify strategies to help reduce the impacts of future disaster events in Alabama. The meetings are intended to allow public input before the statewide plan is finalized.”

In each of these meetings representatives from AEMA gave brief presentations about the necessity of the plan and explained progress to date. Attendees were given handout materials that included points-of-contact for additional questions about the plan.

In a conference call with AEMA on March 29, 2007, FEMA confirmed that there was no federal requirement for public involvement in the state plan development process. Because attendance at the Public Meetings during the initial plan development was quite low, and due to time constraints, it was determined AEMA would simply make the draft plan available for public comment by placing it on its website. This was done on July 10, 2007 and advertised to the Public. No comments were received from the public.

Consultant Assistance in Developing the Plan

In addition to the groups discussed above, AEMA secured the services of a professional consultant to facilitate the planning process and develop some technical materials. URS, the consultant, assisted AEMA and the SHMT in a variety of ways:

- Development of an appropriate planning process;
- Technical support in performing the risk and vulnerability assessments;
- Development of written materials for meetings and web postings;
- Presentations at SHMT meetings and regional workshops;
- Facilitation of SHMT meetings, i.e. ensuring that discussions and products from meetings addressed plan elements;
- Preparing meeting minutes;
- Assembling information for inclusion in the plan; and
- Assisting with logistics functions to ensure that SHMT members were kept informed of progress and provided appropriate materials.

For the plan update, AEMA secured the services of a consultant team which performed a variety of tasks similar to those performed in 2004.

4.5.3 How Other Agencies Participated in the Planning Process

During development of the initial plan, all SHMT member agencies and those with points of contact identified in EO 19 received regular updates on plan progress via email, and all such agencies were invited to attend every general meeting of the SHMT, as well as the public workshops. In each case, all these agencies were provided with meeting materials via an FTP link at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. These agencies participated in the planning process in several ways, but their primary means of doing so was by attending the team meetings and participating in discussions and decisions about various plan procedures and components. The entire planning process was carefully documented. Documentation includes invitee lists, participants, materials provided, presentations, discussions, and decisions made by the planning team at the various meetings. Meeting minutes and lists of attendees are included in **Appendix L**.

As discussed in **Section 5** of this plan (Risk Assessment), State agencies with critical facilities were contacted individually as part of the process of determining statewide risk. These agencies were sent detailed questionnaires intended to identify vulnerabilities and risks at their facilities and to describe any plans or actions in place or under consideration to reduce the risks. These contacts constitute a key element in the planning process because they provide a wide range of State agencies the opportunity to describe their risks and propose mitigation actions to address them.

A range of Federal agencies was also identified in EO 19. These agencies were invited to all planning meetings and were encouraged to provide input to all aspects of the plan. AEMA was established as the main point of contact for this purpose, and telephone numbers and email addresses were provided on communications with the Federal agencies. Records of all communications (including addressees and subject matter) were carefully maintained throughout development of the plan. These agencies were also made aware of the posting on the AEMA web site that described the basic elements of the plan and again provided points of

contact at AEMA for questions or comments. This plan includes minutes of all meetings that were conducted as it was being developed. Each set of minutes includes a list of all those in attendance. The minutes are included in **Appendix L**.

Federal Agencies Designated for Participation on the Alabama SHMT through EO 19:

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;
- The American Red Cross (PNP, not a Federal agency; shown here for completeness);
- The Military Department;
- The National Weather Service, Birmingham;
- The National Weather Service, Huntsville;
- The National Weather Service, Mobile;
- The National Weather Service, Tallahassee;
- U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB;
- U.S. Army, Fort Rucker Army Post; and
- USDA Forest Service.

During the plan update process, the primary mechanism for agency involvement was the SHMT. Agency representatives attended SHMT meetings, reviewed draft sections of the plan, and assisted in making key decisions in the plan update process. In addition, agencies were intimately involved in the update of the mitigation strategy section and risk assessment by providing information to AEMA for inclusion in the plan update.

4.5.4 Summary of Review, Analysis and Update of Each Section

The following provides a brief summary of the methodology utilized to review, analyze, and update each section of the plan.

Section 1 – Table of Contents: Although the overall structure of the Plan remains unchanged, some section titles were altered and some sections were added.

Section 2 – Executive Summary: The executive summary was revised so that it was reflective of the 2007 plan update.

Section 3 – Plan Approval, Adoption, and Assurances: Only minor changes were made to this section. These changes were made to reflect the plan review, approval, and adoption processes that were undertaken for the 2007 update. The updated section also includes revised assurances to reflect the changes in the plan.

Section 4 – The Planning Process: Generally speaking, this section now summarizes the information from the planning process of the 2004 plan with new information added regarding the plan update process. After the catastrophic event of 2005, the SHMT was reassembled and the TACs were reestablished to continue the coordination of the planning process. A comprehensive gap analysis was conducted on each section of the plan and a strategy for updating was developed.

New statewide planning efforts were identified and added to the discussion in **Section 4.3**. In addition, the statewide planning efforts discussed in the 2004 plan were re-evaluated to determine if they were still current and on-going. The discussion of these planning efforts was

revised according to the findings. The same methodology as used to update **Section 4.4** which discusses FEMA mitigation programs and initiatives. The 2004 plan section was reviewed and revised for currency while new programs and initiatives were added to the discussion.

Section 4.5 was revised to provide a summary of the plan development process from 2004, as well as the current plan update process. It documents agency coordination and involvement and summarizes meetings for both the plan development and the plan update.

Section 5 – Risk Assessment: At the start of the planning process, the list of identified hazards was reviewed by AEMA to determine if any changes should be made based on new information. A better understanding of hurricane impacts gained from its experiences with Hurricanes Ivan, Dennis, and Katrina led them to splitting hurricanes into two separate hazards, wind and flooding. The storm surge and inland flooding caused by hurricanes was included in the discussions of flooding while the high winds caused by hurricanes was grouped into the discussion of high winds associated with tornados. In addition, tsunamis have recently been identified as a hazard to which the Gulf Coast could be impacted by and were added to the list of hazards profiled by AEMA, while man-made hazards and HazMat incidents were removed from the plan. Each of the profiles of the remaining hazards was reviewed to determine if more current information was available based on recent studies or actual hazard events. A number of SHMT members provided up-to-date information for inclusion in the hazard profiles section including GSA, ADECA, the National Weather Service, the Office of the State Climatologist, the AARC, the Department of Agriculture and Industry, and the Alabama Forestry Commission. Any new information was included in this update.

The methodology for prioritizing these hazards for further analysis was reviewed by AEMA and the SHMT and determined to still be valid. Hazards were once again ranked according to several criteria discussed in **Section 5.3**. The results of this process were similar to the results in 2004; however, hurricane high winds and tornados had been merged into a single hazard (high winds) and new data on earthquakes led to it receiving high ratings. The results called for detailed risk assessments for floods, high winds, and earthquakes.

The methodologies used in 2004 to develop the vulnerability assessment and potential loss estimates were reviewed to determine which were the most effective in producing usable information. The surveys of county governments and of state agencies were taken out and replaced by more effective methodologies, specifically the review of local risk assessments. Potential loss estimates were then developed for the selected hazards (flood, high winds, and earthquakes) using the identified methodologies and the most current data available as described in **Section 5.5**. One significant new methodology involved a review of project worksheets applications for Public Assistance funding. These worksheets were reviewed to determine which jurisdictions have experienced the most damage over the last six years. The addition of a detailed risk assessment for earthquakes to this section of the plan was also significant.

An additional section was added, **Section 5.7**, to discuss the impacts of development trends on vulnerability. This section addresses the changes how the changes in population and economic development affect jurisdictions' vulnerability to natural hazards.

Section 6 – Mitigation Strategy: In the spring of 2007, the SHMT reaffirmed the State's mitigation strategy that was identified in the 2004 Plan. SHMT members each completed a survey that requested input on the hazard mitigation goals and actions identified in the 2004 plan. These were reviewed and it was determined that the goals were still applicable relevant to

the update. In addition, each was asked to provide new actions that the agency was interested in pursuing and including in the plan update. These were incorporated into the updated section on mitigation actions (**Section 6.8**). A review of mitigation activities from 2004 to 2007 was conducted and summarized in this section. The assessments of state capabilities and funding sources (**Section 6.4 thru 6.6 and 6.9**) were reviewed to determine what information was still current. Sections were revised to reflect this assessment. In addition, new capabilities and funding sources were identified and incorporated into this update. The review of local capabilities (**Section 6.7**) was reviewed and determined to be no longer current. Therefore, a more in depth assessment of local capabilities was conducted and this section was entirely rewritten.

Section 7 – Coordination of Local Planning: The gap analysis of this section revealed that much progress has been made since 2004 in the development of local plans. During the development of the 2004 plan, no local plans had been approved and adopted. Now, with the support of AEMA and the RPCs, 64 out of 67 counties have approved local hazard mitigation plans. Because this is such a drastic change from the 2004 Plan, the 2007 update had to reflect the local mitigation participation and activities. This also allowed AEMA to conduct a review of these plans to extract and incorporate information into this plan update. This process also allowed AEMA to cross-check its hazard data and mitigation strategy with those of the local plans to ensure integration and linkages exist between the local and state plans. This section includes a detailed discussion of that process.

Section 8 – Plan Maintenance: The method for monitoring, evaluating, and updating was revised slightly to reflect the plan maintenance activities that were proven to be effective since the 2004 plan adoption.

Section 9 – Enhanced Plan Elements: This section was not changed as part of the 2007 Plan update process.

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